
2. REPORT ON THE UTILIZATION OF THE
GOVERNMENT VOICE MESSAGING SERVICE (GVMS)
IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS

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FOREWORD

The author would like to thank the Department of Communications' employees who contributed to this study. Even with busy schedule, everybody tried to find time either to return my calls or to answer the questionnaire and I really appreciate it. I promised respondents that this report would be available to them in appreciation for their cooperation.

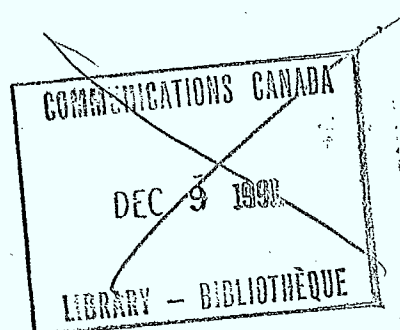
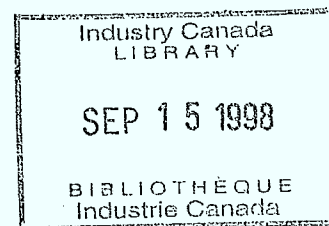


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The Government Telecommunications Agency (GTA) implemented the Government Voice Messaging Service (GVMS) in September, 1989. Since communicating verbally is so crucial in the Government, any barrier to its occurrence or free expression would be interpreted as inefficient. Preliminary studies conducted before the introduction of GVMS showed that voice messaging is perceived as improving telephone communication and increasing efficiency. Guidelines were produced on the implementation of voice messaging and GTA keeps monitoring the Service in order to correct major limitations which could impede communication.

The present is a study undertaken by GTA in the Department of Communications (DOC) to determine the nature of the problems associated with the use of the Government Voice Messaging Service.

METHODOLOGY

- A questionnaire (see Annex B) was designed for a telephone survey of 15 minutes.
- Every day over a period of two weeks, 2 voice messages, one English and one French, were sent to groups of approximately 10 people each to obtain their responses to the questionnaire.
- The time lapse before the users returned the call or responded to the message was recorded. (The results are based on 194 actual subscribers.)
- A total of 69 subscribers were surveyed. Therefore, the results of the questionnaire are based on 69 respondents.

RESULTS

Calls Returned (see Figure 4.1)

- 73% of the 194 subscribers contacted returned the call:
 - 18% within the first 15 minutes;
 - 64% within the same working day.

- 27% never returned the call (even a month afterwards).

Note: The rate of no response is probably unreasonably high due to word getting around that a telephone survey was being conducted. Since the survey was carried over a two-week period, the name of the interviewer became associated with the survey. In fact, the rate of non-response almost doubled during the second week.

Positive Aspects of Voice Mail as Seen by Respondents

The majority of all the respondents' comments can be grouped under the three following assertions.

- 1) The capability of communicating without making actual contact:

"The ability to leave a message with a complete content decreases telephone tag and saves time".

- 2) The capability of getting in touch:

"The telephone always gets answered after three rings; people can always be reached even when away from their office since messages can be retrieved from outside".

- 3) The capability of providing prompt service:

"Subscribers to voice mail do not miss any calls; the message is available as soon as the person is ready to take it and people tend to return their calls faster when they have access to voice messaging".

Negative Aspects Voice Mail as Seen by Respondents

As far as disadvantages of, using voice mail is concerned, respondents' comments do not tend to regroup as massively around a few main assertions as they did for advantages. The following are the three main concerns.

- 1) Annoyed at reaching a machine and not knowing how to reach a live person easily:

- revert-to-operator not well known,
- greetings not updated to indicate length of absence.

- 2) Calls not returned or not returned promptly.

- 3) No message left by callers or message with no detailed content.

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS

DOC has had access to voice messaging for a year and a half. There are no design problems with the system and the implementation has been done according to guidelines. Subscribers to the Service are still in the transition phase with the majority feeling their way around. More information and training are needed to shape new working habits.

Three sources of frustration were identified as stated above. The following recommendations derive from the responses in the survey and aim to alleviate the frustration related to using voice messaging.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Training

- Users, when they first subscribe to the Service, are given enough training to be able to do the basics. The system is relatively easy to understand once you know the basics; some went beyond the content of the course on their own. The majority, though, agree they would require further information (or training) on voice messaging applications and on how to use the system more efficiently.

Briefing sessions could be offered on a Divisional basis where not only applications but also administrative issues (i.e. where calls should revert, etc.) pertinent to each group could be discussed.

Another suggestion would be to give the users one tip every week by way of the voice messaging system on how to use the system.

Revert-to-operator

- The *revert-to-operator* (option to direct or revert a call to the secretary or receptionist) was installed to give callers access to a live person instead of leaving a message. In DOC, most voice mailboxes are equipped with this feature but too many users are not aware of it. Therefore, it is not indicated in their greeting and, the majority of employees placing an urgent call will use the option only if it is mentioned.

Divisions should reassess how the *revert-to-operator* option has been implemented at their group level; it should be ascertained that staff receive more information regarding this feature and that everyone's greeting indicates clearly how to reach a live person. Establishing functional procedures that give access easily to a live person would temper one of the main source of frustration associated with voice mail.

- The telephone number where all the calls of a division are reverted should not be equipped with a voice mailbox. If it is, then that back-up telephone should not be call forwarded to the voice messaging system during normal working hours.
- This option does not cost any extra to be installed. Every mailbox should have it so that callers can reach a live person. Even the divisions which don't have a secretary should revert the calls to a designated secretary or receptionist in the Branch. Every employee would then be responsible to keep that secretary or receptionist informed of their schedule.
- Employees who are going to be away from the office for a day or more should either change their greeting to indicate the period they will be away or call-forward their telephone to the secretary. Support staff should call-forward the telephones of employees calling in sick in the morning to these individuals' secretaries. Secretaries in turn can offer the callers a choice: talk to someone else, leave a message with them or be transferred to the called party's mailbox.

Greetings

- In their personal greeting, subscribers should include the following:
 - a) name;
 - b) how to reach a live person;
 - c) the latter should be in both official languages so that callers do not feel trapped in voice mail.

Individuals should not only say "Press 0 to reach a live person" but also give the telephone number since there are still people outside the Government who do not have "touch-tone" telephones. It is not recommended to give the telephone number of a colleague who has also access to a voice mailbox.

In order for the system to retain its userfriendliness, it has to be kept in mind that it is dependent on secretaries and receptionists as back-up answering. Therefore, while planning for resources, secretaries or receptionists cannot be replaced altogether by voice mail.

Pager

- DOC staff in strategic positions and who need to be reached on a timely basis could have their voice mailbox forwarded to a pager.

Complete or Detailed Messages

- When reaching voice mailboxes, callers are reminded to leave detailed messages. That ensures a higher and quicker rate of response.

Returning Calls

- In this study, 27% of the calls were never returned. The response rate is related to the survey and cannot be attributed to voice messaging. However, respondents did complain that calls were not returned. DOC will want to stress the need to return calls in order to increase efficiency and reduce another source of frustration.

1 INTRODUCTION

Studies have shown that, as one goes up the organizational hierarchy, verbal communication takes more prominence so as to become the most prevalent form of communication for senior management. Since communicating verbally is so crucial in the Government, any barrier to its occurrence or free expression will be interpreted as inefficient, to say the least. Vice versa, anything that facilitates verbal connection and the flow of communication will be regarded as efficient and therefore desirable.

The Government Telecommunications Agency (GTA) implemented the Government Voice Messaging Service (GVMS) in September, 1989. Preliminary studies were conducted before the introduction of the Service. Results showed that voice messaging is perceived as improving telephone communication and increasing efficiency. Guidelines were produced on the implementation of voice messaging and GTA keeps monitoring the Service in order to correct major limitations which could impede communication.

2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Following complaints from ADMRS, GTA undertook a study in DOC, in April 1991 to determine the nature of the problems associated with the use of the Government Voice Messaging Service.

3 METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire was designed for this purpose and was used to conduct a telephone survey which took on the average 15 minutes to answer.

3.1 Selection of respondents

For the purpose of selecting respondents, a three-month old list of GVMS subscribers in DOC was used. This meant that users had at least three months experience with voice mail.

There were 518 users on that list from CRC and HQ. Out of these, staff from GTA (i.e. 145) were excluded since they were surveyed last year. Out of the 373 names left,

the DGs were excluded. Among the remaining, 205 names were selected at random. Of the 205 names selected, 11 voice mailboxes were disconnected. Therefore, 194 actual subscribers were contacted.

3.2 Procedures

Every morning, the evaluator sent 2 voice messages, one English and one French, to groups of approximately 10 people each.

The message contained only the name of the evaluator, her telephone number and a request to call back; the reason for calling was not given. Either the subscribers reached the interviewer directly or reached the interviewer's voice mailbox. In either case, the time the call was returned was recorded. The results are based on the 194 actual subscribers.

Those who did not reach the interviewer directly were called back by the interviewer. The latter explained to everybody the purpose of the survey and requested their participation in answering the questionnaire over the telephone. A total of 69 users were surveyed. Since the answers given to the questionnaire were homogeneous, it was assumed that this number was representative of the population of users in DOC.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Response Time

Of the 194 messages left in voice mailboxes to actual users, 73% of the users returned the call: 18% within the first 15 minutes; 64% within the same working day (see Figure 4.1). But 27% never returned the call. This last figure seems quite high and cannot be explained by the use of voice messaging. The evaluator is not widely known in DOC but there is always the possibility that, as the survey went on during a couple of weeks, people associated the name with the survey and avoided returning the call in order to avoid being trapped in answering the questionnaire. In fact the rate of non-response almost doubled during the second week of the survey.

GVMS SURVEY IN DOC

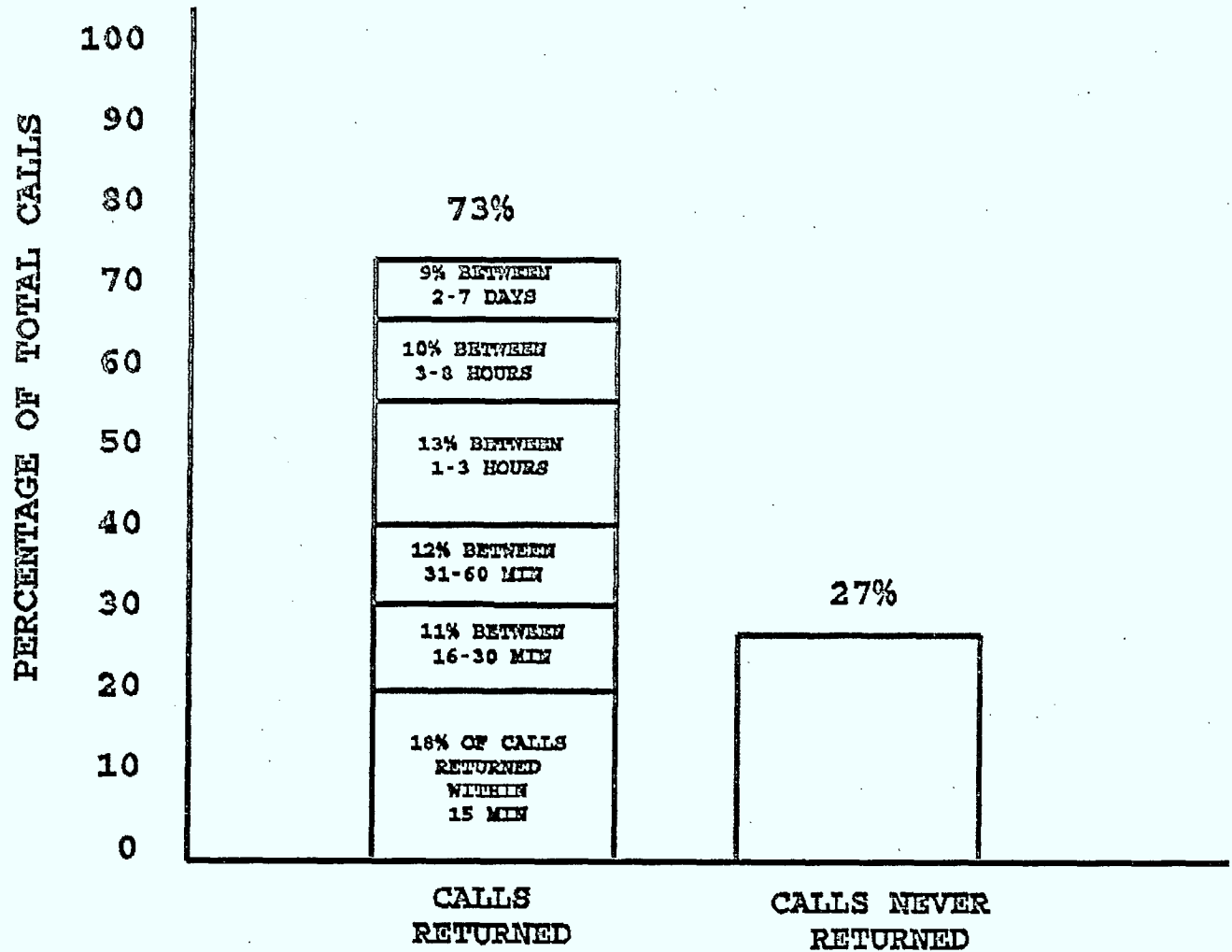


Fig. 4.1 Percentage of total calls returned and time of response.

4.2 Features Generally Implemented

About a year ago, GTA recommended a scenario of implementation which would satisfy the needs of most users who do not have personal secretaries but who have divisional or branch secretaries as back-up telephone answering.

The scenario consists of the following:

- the telephone is set at *call forward busy/call forward don't answer*. This reroutes all the calls to the voice messaging system if the phone is busy or not answered;
- it is equipped with an icon that is activated or a light which flashes when a new message is in the mailbox;
- a *revert-to-operator* feature which allows the caller to revert back to the secretary or receptionist during hearing the subscriber's personal greeting.

This scenario was retained during the implementation in DOC; most users have access to the aforementioned features. All users who were interviewed have a telephone equipped with an icon or a flashing light.

Most subscribers have access to the *revert-to-operator* feature. Some Divisions (i.e. DAI) did not implement it because they wanted their secretaries to have their own mailboxes which could be activated when away from their desk.

However, most subscribers without personal secretaries have their call, after three rings or when the phone is busy, rerouted to the voice messaging system. Some Divisions (as Material Management) prefer that the calls be rerouted to the receptionist instead of voice mail; staff might forward all calls to the voice messaging system when need be.

Out of the 69 subscribers interviewed, except for the newly arrived staff, the majority said that they or management had been given the option to have these characteristics on their system. Everybody, except one, said they were satisfied with the features selected and the way the system is set up to operate in their organization.

4.3 Least Known Feature: Revert-to-Operator

Even if most users acknowledge that they were offered a choice about the set-up and even if most have access to the *revert-to-operator* feature, it is still the most ill known feature.

25% of the subscribers surveyed are not aware that *revert-to-operator* is available on their mailbox; therefore, they do not mention in their greeting how to revert back to the operator. 42% of the users surveyed, when placing an urgent call, will press 0 to revert to the secretary or receptionist only if this capability is mentioned in the called party's greeting.

More information should be disseminated on this feature. Its use would alleviate a lot of frustration associated with voice mail.

4.4 Length of Time in Use

Subscribers do not tend to remember exactly when they had access to voice messaging. For 73%, their best guess was a year or more; 27% have had access to it between 4 and 10 months. Therefore, the users surveyed had time to use the voice messaging system in a day-to-day working environment and become familiar with it.

The fact that they have difficulty remembering when they had access to it is a sign that voice messaging is not intrusive in their working environment.

4.5 Features Used and Applications

For most subscribers, calls are rerouted automatically to the voice messaging system if the telephone is not answered after three rings or if it is busy. Then, the voice messaging system is acting in its telephone answering capability. This capability is reported by 75% of the sample to be the most used (see Table 4.5).

In terms of usage, the telephone answering capability is followed by voice messaging features: the capability to receive messages from others who have access to voice messaging (55%), reply to messages via the voice messaging system (48%), compose and send messages to

Table 4.5 Percentage of subscribers surveyed using different features or applications of the voice messaging system.

Voice messaging system's capability to:

- answer the telephone when it is busy or not answered after three rings.....75%

Users' capability to:

- receive messages from others who have access to voice messaging.....55%
- reply to messages via the voice messaging system.....48%
- compose and send messages to other users.....35%
- reroute messages to colleague.....30%
- leave oneself reminders when away from the office....30%
- check for voice messages when away from the office...10%

Applications:

- call your mailbox from another user's telephone.....64%
 - call your mailbox from outside (i.e. your home).....62%
 - skip a user's personal greeting.....46%
 - call another user's mailbox by calling the voice messaging service's central number.....30%
 - transfer an outside caller to a colleague's mailbox..16%
 - record important calls via Conference 3 on the telephone..... 0%
 - make use of a guest mailbox for a contact such as a contractor who is outside the Department..... 0%
-

other users (35%), reroute messages to colleagues (30%) and finally, leave oneself reminders when away from the office (30%).

Some features such as group messaging might not be needed by all subscribers and can therefore sustain a low utilization (16%).

10% reported checking their voice mailbox from home. More people would like to be able to use this capability but they do not have a "touch-tone" telephone at home nor access to a digital telephone line. This capability might be used more as digital lines become more widespread.

The telephone answering capability of GVMS is better than an answering machine because it can record the calls when the telephone is busy. But, the voice messaging features are the capabilities which offer the most flexibility to the subscribers; it is where messaging really comes into its own. Between 50 and 60% of the respondents do not take advantages of the messaging features such as composing and sending, replying directly to messages, etc. Employees reported spontaneously that they have ways around these features and have not incorporated them in their working habits. They do not want more training since they feel they know how to use them.

Sometimes all it takes is more encouragement to dare to use it; a brain storming on applications at the Division level might increase an efficient use of GVMS.

As far as applications are concerned, fully a third of all the respondents do not know how to reach their voice mailbox when they are away from their desk; two-thirds do not know how to reach someone else's mailbox without calling them directly. More than half do not know how to skip personal greetings; it explains why users find them always too long (even more so after hearing them for the nth times the same day). Finally, more than 80% do not know how to transfer a caller into someone else's mailbox. The latter is an important application: instead of taking a message for a colleague or a supervisor, employees could transfer callers to a mailbox.

Of course, nobody had used more unusual applications such as recording important calls via Conference 3 on the telephone or, making use of a guest mailbox for a contact such as a contractor who is outside the Department.

These figures on applications really underline the point that there is a need for more advanced training or briefing on the use of GVMS.

4.6 Practices With Voice Messaging

4.6.1 Forwarding All Calls to Either GVMS or Secretary

At least 30% of the subscribers to voice mail forward punctually all their calls to either voice messaging or the secretary when leaving their office even if their calls are rerouted to the voice messaging system when the telephone is not answered.

17% forward all their calls to voice messaging and the distribution is equally between "everytime I leave the office", "leaving for a few hours" or "leaving for a day".

13% forward all their calls to the secretary. The distribution is bipolar: "everytime I leave the office" and "leaving for more than one day".

Forwarding all calls when away from the office is a very efficient way of managing telephone calls except that it is very difficult to reinforce such a practice on a large scale. GTA has found out in previous studies that employees tend to forget to call-forward their telephone when leaving their office or forget to remove the call-forward option when returning to their office.

In the present study, those who are forwarding all calls punctually are doing it the right way. Forwarding all calls to voice messaging when leaving the office for less than a day would save time for callers who do not have to wait the three telephone rings before reaching the mailbox. Normally, the length of the absence should be included in the greeting but either callers skip the greeting or the subscribers do not change their greeting to reflect the length of their absence. Therefore, forwarding all calls to the secretary when leaving for more than a day would be more efficient for callers since they would know when the person is expected back and allow them to plan accordingly. This practice would palliate to one of the frustration callers

experience with voice messaging: not knowing if the person called is in the office that day. Its implementation has to be defined at the Division level.

4.6.2 Greetings' Content

GTA, in its Implementation Guidelines, recommended that at least the three following elements be included in the greeting:

- 1) the name of the subscriber to the mailbox,
- 2) an escape route from the mailbox which state either to press 0 to reach the secretary or receptionist or to dial a given number to reach the latter and finally,
- 3) this reference to reaching a live person should be in both official languages.

Therefore, not only individuals calling from outside but also from inside the Government do not feel trapped in a voice mailbox.

Every respondent to the survey has their name in their greeting. A few secretaries with mailboxes use their supervisor's name as the identification.

43% of the personal greetings indicate how to reach the secretary; 4% do not do so because they do not have a secretary. Out of those who state how to reach the secretary, practically half do not know if the secretary has access to voice messaging and if there is a chance that the caller will reach another mailbox. However, according to the Telecom Admin, there should be no "mailbox maze" in DOC. In fact, the interviewer, during the survey, could not find a respondent who ever activated *revert-to-operator* during another subscriber's greeting and reached the secretary's mailbox. Some heard that it happened to others calling other departments but not in DOC.

Subscribers reported, though, that some greetings indicate to call a colleague if callers want to speak to a live person. If that colleague has also voice mail, the callers have the feeling of being trapped in a maze of mailboxes.

It is not recommended to give the telephone number of a colleague who has also access to a voice mailbox.

75% have their greeting in both official languages; for a good majority of DOC staff a bilingual greeting is "Bonjour" at the beginning and "Merci" at the end. While this may be acceptable as a telephone greeting, this is not quite enough for a mailbox greeting. Outsiders have to be able to understand how to get out of voice messaging and reach a secretary or receptionist.

DOC should reinforce the design of proper personal greetings which would be uniform throughout the Department.

43% of the respondents never change their greeting; 35% change it if they leave for more than one day; 22% change it if they leave for more than 2 days. Among those who never change their greeting, a few (6 respondents out of 30) forward all their calls to the secretary. When users complain that, by listening to the greeting, they do not know if the persons they call are in the office or not, or for how long they will be away from their desk, they have good reasons to complain.

It is recommended that, when away from the office for a day or more, subscribers change their greeting or forward all their calls to the secretary or receptionist.

Subscribers feel that the ability to record and store two or more greetings would allow them to activate the proper greeting as needed. The only problem with this is that generic greetings with no timeframe (i.e. starting date of leave) will be recorded. The caller is left with no time reference. The information will be quite misleading if subscribers do not update their greetings upon their return.

4.6.3 Leaving Messages on Voice Mail

When placing a call which is not urgent and reaching the mailbox, 84% of the respondents report that they leave a message; 16% will hang up and place that call later on. The latter report disliking talking to a machine. Their preferred mode of communication is written electronic mail or face-to-face communications, the telephone being a less preferred mode to start with.

When placing an urgent call and reaching the mailbox, 42% will press 0 to reach the secretary if *revert-to-operator* is mentioned in the greeting. 19% will press 0 during the greeting even if *revert-to-operator* is not mentioned in the greeting. 7% will leave a message anyway but 32% will try to either find the person by walking to their office or they will try to reach someone else in the same office or division by dialing their number directly. When a call is urgent, people in the Department have resources; an outsider would be more limited. Therefore, it is not enough that the *revert-to-operator* feature has been implemented on a large scale. Subscribers have to know about it and let the callers know about it.

When respondents were asked what type of information they left in their voice messages, 70% reported leaving their name, telephone number and a message with content (i.e. the reason they were calling). 16% said that only half the messages they left to other subscribers had a content; 14% of the respondents said they left only their name and telephone number.

When asked what type of information was contained in the messages they received, 20% of the respondents reported that all their messages contained the name, telephone number of the caller and a message with a detailed content; 20% reported that all the messages they received contained only the name and telephone number of the caller. 42% of the respondents reported that only half of all the messages they received had a content and the rest reported a mixed percentage of messages with and without content.

While more subscribers report leaving messages with content than the number of messages with content they receive, everybody agrees that the number of messages with content has gone up since the beginning of the implementation and that it makes their job easier.

Leaving a message with a detailed content is more efficient for both the caller and the person called. The first gets it out of his/her mind; the latter can prepare and research the answer.

4.6.4 Listening to Messages

In preliminary research, GTA came to the realization that a flashing light would be the best prompt to incite subscribers to listen to their messages.

In the present study, at least 91% of the respondents report listening to their voice messages as soon as they see the light flashing. The rest of the sample fixes specific times when they listen to their messages and usually it is at least twice a day.

4.7 Commitment to Return Calls

Respondents were asked to rate DOC staff in general on their commitment to return their calls. They gave an average rating saying that people they deal with on a regular basis tend to return their calls but the response might be long in coming at times.

Four respondents complained about DOC staff not returning calls. The complaint is not widespread in the Department; our statistics in the present study tend to show that at least 10% of the employees in DOC do not return their calls. Not returning calls is not linked to voice messaging *per se*; for certain people it is their way of prioritizing work.

DOC might want to take a second look to this figure and stress that all calls should be returned promptly in order to increase productivity.

4.8 Impact of Voice Mail in the Work Environment

Asked if the human dimension was missing or lacking since voice messaging had been introduced in DOC, 52% answered a categoric no. Another 13% gave a mitigated answer as "Yes, but the decrease of telephone tag outweighs this", or "But people are getting used to it". Finally, those who feel that the human dimension is lacking with voice messaging say that they themselves do not mind talking to machines but that people in general hate talking to machines. But on the other hand, as a few respondents were saying: "At least the telephone gets answered".

4.9 Impact of Voice Mail on Day-to-Day Transactions

78% of the respondents agreed that business transactions could be concluded faster with the use of voice messaging. The distribution is like this: 70% feel that you can leave a complete message or a message with a complete content which allows communication without actual contact; 7% believe that voice messaging decreases the number of telephone calls and 1% have used group messaging to organize meetings and feel that it is a great time saver.

22% of the respondents do not think that voice messaging increases efficiency; they prefer E-mail to voice mail.

Communicating without establishing actual contact is certainly one of the advantages of voice messaging.

4.10 Training/Follow-Up Session

81% of the respondents had received training and the majority were satisfied saying that it was enough to be able to do the basics. The majority of those who did not receive training did not desire it saying that the system was self-explanatory.

In general respondents were satisfy with the documentation. The majority stop using the user's manual after a short while and use mainly an abstract of the menue tree. Some have a pocket-size card with the menue tree on it. Those who do not have one should be able to get one from their telecommunications administrator.

Now that users have learned and used the basics for a while they are ready for a more advanced session where they would receive tips on how to use voice messaging more efficiently. As an example, the capability to leave oneself reminders when away from the office was said to be interesting and more users would have used it if only they had thought of it. 70% of subscribers surveyed would like to attend a briefing session or a more advanced session on voice mail. This figure rises to 90% if they could receive tips without leaving their office as required by a briefing or training session.

Briefing sessions could be offered on a divisional basis where administrative issues pertinent at that group level, applications and features (i.e. revert-to-operator) could be discussed.

Another suggestion could be to give the users one tip every week by way of the voice messaging system.

4.11 Advantages of Voice Mail as Seen by Subscribers

51% of all the comments made by the respondents on the advantages of using voice mail are regrouped under the following assertion: "The ability to leave a message with a complete content decreases telephone tag and saves time".

15% refer to the capability of getting in touch: "The telephone always gets answered after three rings; people can always be reached even when away from their office since messages can be retrieved from outside".

14% of all the comments fall under the following assertion which underlines the capability of providing prompt service: "Subscribers to voice mail do not miss any calls; the message is available as soon as the person is ready to take it and people tend to return their calls faster when they have access to voice messaging".

4.12 Disadvantages of Voice Mail as Seen by Subscribers

As far as the disadvantages of using voice mail are concerned, respondents do not tend to regroup as massively around a few main comments as they did for the advantages. The following report the comments which were made by more than one individual.

13% of all the comments refer to people being generally annoyed at reaching a machine.

13% refer to greetings being too long, the difficulty of recording a greeting and the fact that subscribers do not update them.

13% refer to the fact that some subscribers to voice mail hide behind their mailbox and do not return their calls.

8% deal with the fact that some do not leave messages or do not leave a content to their message which is not efficient.

4% refer to the fact that everybody should have access to voice mail.

Note: Some respondents who had reached other voice messaging systems such as in ADMAH or in the Auditor General Branch complained that all the steps involved in order to be able to leave a message are numerous and too lengthy. These systems are call distributors and are considered by users as too slow compared to GVMS.

4.13 Keeping Voice Mail

97% of the respondents express the wish to retain their voice mailbox. 3% would rather not keep it but will nonetheless.

This figure is quite eloquent; in previous studies, GTA has found out the similar results. Even if subscribers to the Service do not use voice messaging to its fullest capability, they still end up depending heavily on it if only to record the messages.

5 SURVEY OF NON-SUBSCRIBERS TO GVMS IN DOC

Finally, the evaluator surveyed DOC staff who didn't have access to GVMS but who had reached a voice mailbox at some time or other in DOC. This endeavour was rendered difficult by the fact that most of DOC staff have access to voice messaging. The evaluator ended up placing 37 calls; out of these 14 individuals called were on long term leave. Of the 23 calls placed to non-subscribers, 2 never returned the message and 4 couldn't be reached because nobody answered the telephone. Therefore, 26% of this sample could not be reached.

17 were surveyed about their likes and dislikes when reaching a voice mailbox in the Department. The question referred specifically to this Department since other departments might have access to voice messaging systems other than GVMS and are probably configured differently from DOC's.

Most of the people surveyed fell into two groups: secretaries and engineers. The former say they do not mind reaching a voice mailbox and think that it is more efficient to be able to leave a message with content than leaving just a request to call back with a secretary or a colleague of the called party. The latter tend to hate talking to machines; they prefer talking to people and send written messages via electronic mail.

The sample surveyed is too small to be statistically of any relevance. To be able to compare the reticence of people outside the System would certainly require a greater sample. This information in itself is trivial except that it shows a tendency for certain groups to prefer one media of communication over another but there is room in office automation for diversity.

6 TROUBLE REPORTING

58% of the respondents said they know that they should report problems, if any, to the telecommunications administrator's office; 15% said they would call the same office if they ever had any questions concerning the use of voice messaging.

Respondents reported being quite satisfied with the support they received from the telecom officers feeling that they went out of their way to solve their problems (like giving newcomers to the Department individual training on GVMS).

In the Department of Communications, any trouble with GVMS should be reported to the telecommunications administrator's office. Officers will, in turn, refer to GTA or to the vendor (TIME Communications) depending on the nature of the problems.

The Agency will keep monitoring the Service and correct problems in order to eliminate any barriers to efficient telephone communications.

CONCLUSIONS

This concludes a series of studies (see Annex A) conducted by GTA on voice mail in general and on the Government Voice Messaging Service more specifically.

As the recommendations (included in the Executive Summary) show, there is room for improvement in the way users deal with voice mail. However, there are no major problems involved with GVMS. Subscribers are relatively satisfied; those who have explored further than the telephone answering capability of GVMS and used more of the messaging features on the system would not do without it.

If one recommendation had to be implemented first, it should be tips on how to use the system more efficiently. The more power users will derive from voice messaging, the more cooperation there will be to develop and implement good practices which will decrease the resistance to "talk to machines" or simply "deal with machines".

Annex A

This contains a list of studies conducted by the Government Telecommunications Agency on voice mail in general and on the Government Voice Messaging Service more specifically.

Small-Scale Trial of the Voice MessengerTM: Results of an Evaluation. May, 1987.

Meridian DV-1 Office Automation Trial, Transport Canada - Pacific Region: Post-Implementation Evaluation Report. August, 1987.

Meridian SL-1 Voice-Only Messaging: Results of an Evaluation of a Field Trial. November, 1987.

Results of an Evaluation of an Office Automation Field Trial in the Airworthiness Branch, Transport Canada. January, 1988.

Guidelines on Implementation and Evaluation of a Voice Messaging System, May 1989.

Evaluation of GVMS Implementation in GTA. March, 1990.

Guidelines for the Implementation of the Government Voice Messaging Service (GVMS). November, 1990.

Annex B

This contains a copy of the English and French questionnaires used to conduct the telephone survey in the present study.

TELEPHONE SURVEY ON THE UTILIZATION OF THE
GOVERNMENT VOICE MESSAGING SERVICE (GVMS) IN DOC

Introduction

The implementation of the Government Voice Messaging Service (GVMS) has started over a year ago in the Federal Government and there are a few hundred employees in DOC who have access to voice messaging. At the request of ADMRS, GTA is doing a telephone survey on the use of GVMS in the Department.

If you agree to answer my questions, GTA will insure that your answers are kept anonymous and aggregated with other respondents' answers when reported.

Name:

Group and level:

Division:

Branch:

Sector:

First Voice Message Left by MMM:

Comments:

Date Questionnaire Filled:

Government Telecommunications Agency
Final Version, May 1991

Telephone Survey on GVMS' utilization in DOC

- 1 Since when do you have access to a voice messaging system?
-

- 2 Is your phone or your voice messaging system equipped with:

-----a flashing light or a visual prompt on your telephone
that indicates new messages in the mailbox

-----revert-to-operator - 0 pressed during the greeting
reverts the caller to the secretary or receptionist

-----automatic rerouting of calls to voice messaging if
your line is busy or if not answered

NO TO ONE OF THESE ITEMS, GO TO QUESTION 3.

- 3 Please indicate if you would require these features you
don't have:

-----a flashing light or a visual prompt on your telephone
that indicates new messages in the mailbox

-----revert-to-operator - 0 pressed during the greeting
reverts the caller to the secretary or receptionist

-----automatic rerouting of calls to voice messaging if
your line is busy or if not answered

- 4 Were you ever given the option to have these features?

-----yes

-----no

5 When you leave the office, do you:

-----call forward your phone to voice mail

-----everytime you leave the office

-----only when you leave for more than _____ hours
or days

-----call forward your phone to the secretary or
receptionist

-----everytime you leave the office

-----only when you leave for more than _____ hours
or days

-----do no call forward; leave the telephone set up as it
is (i.e. it rings 3 times and the call goes to the mailbox)

6 How do you use the voice messaging system:

-----to answer the telephone when it is busy or when not
answered

-----to compose and send messages to other users

-----to receive messages from others who have access to
voice messaging

-----to reply to messages

-----to reroute a message to a colleague

-----to do group messaging

-----leave yourself reminders when away from the office

-----record important calls via Conference 3 on the
telephone

-----make use of a guest mailbox for a contact such as a
contractor who is outside the Department

-----other. Explain.

- 7 If you place a call which is not urgent and reach somebody's mailbox in DOC, do you:
- leave a message
 - hang up and try again
 - press 0 during the greeting
 - press 0 only when revert-to-operator is indicated in the greeting
- 8 If you place a call which is urgent and reach somebody's mailbox, do you:
- leave a message
 - hang up and try again
 - press 0 during the greeting
 - press 0 only when revert-to-operator is indicated in the greeting
- 9 When you leave a message to somebody else, what information do you leave, in general?
- name, telephone number and content of the message
 - name, telephone number and request to call back
- 10 When other people leave you a message, in general, what information do they leave?
- name, telephone number and content of the message
 - name, telephone number and request to call back
- 11 What is the type of information contained in your greeting?
- your name
 - how to reach the secretary
 - message in both official languages

- 12 Does the revert-to-operator or the telephone number that you give in your personal greeting (usually the secretary's or receptionist's) correspond to a telephone which is forwarded to a mailbox when the telephone is busy or not answered?

-----yes

-----no

-----do not know

-----does not apply

- 13 Do you ever change your personal greeting

-----yes. If so, when _____

-----no

- 14 Do you listen to your voice messages

-----when the light flashes

-----at a set time every day

- 15 What would you say are the greatest advantages or positive aspects of voice messaging in DOC?

- 16 What would you say are the greatest disadvantages of using voice messaging in DOC?

- 17 How would you rate DOC employees' commitment to return their
calls?

1 7

poor excellent

- 18 Do you feel that the human dimension is missing or lacking since voice messaging has been introduced in DOC? If yes, please explain.

- 19 Would you say that business transactions can be concluded faster with the use of voice messaging? Explain.

- 20 Have you received any training on voice messaging?

-----yes (GO TO QUESTION 22)

-----no (GO TO QUESTION 21)

- 21 Would you like to go on a short training course?

-----yes

-----no

(GO TO QUESTION 26)

22 Who gave you the training on voice messaging?

-----TIME COMMUNICATIONS Name of Trainer_____

-----a colleague

-----other. Specify.

23 After the training session was completed, could you use the voice messaging system on your own without help from your colleagues or from the trainer?

-----yes

-----no

24 If no, why not and, who helped you to use your system?

25 Would you say that you couldn't use the system on your own because:

-----explanations during the training session were unclear or insufficient;

-----lack of hands-on experience during the training session;

-----no information on the system was distributed before going to the training session;

-----any other reason. State-----

26 Do you use the User's Manual?

-----still use it regularly

-----still use it from time to time

-----don't use it anymore

-----have never used it

27 Would you like to see any modifications to the User's Manual?

-----yes. Specify.

-----no

28 Do you know how to do the following with your voice messaging system:

-----call your mailbox from another user's telephone

-----call your mailbox from outside (i.e. your home)

-----call another user's mailbox by calling the central number for voice mail or GVMS

-----transfer an outside caller to a colleague's mailbox

-----skip a user's personal greeting

-----how to report problems

-----who to call when you have questions concerning the use of voice messaging

29 Would you like to have a session where you would receive tips on how to use voice messaging more efficiently?

-----yes

-----no

30 Do you wish to retain your mailbox?

-----yes

-----no

- 31 Do you have any other comments on voice messaging or on the Government Voice Messaging Service to which you have access?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!

ENQUÊTE TÉLÉPHONIQUE SUR L'UTILISATION DU
SERVICE FÉDÉRAL D'AUDIO-MESSAGERIE (SFAM) AU MDC

Introduction

L'implantation du Service fédéral d'audio-messagerie (SFAM) est commencée depuis plus d'un an au Gouvernement Fédéral et plusieurs centaines d'employés du Ministère ont accès à l'audio-messagerie.

À la demande du SMARS, l'ATG fait un sondage par téléphone sur l'utilisation de l'audio-messagerie au Ministère.

Si vous voulez bien répondre à mes questions, l'ATG s'engage à garder vos réponses anonymes et à rapporter vos réponses que sous forme agrégée.

Nom :

Groupe et niveau :

Division :

Branche :

Secteur:

Premier message vocal laissé par MMM :

Commentaires :

Date du questionnaire rempli :

Agence des télécommunications gouvernementales
Version finale, mai 1991

Enquête téléphonique sur l'implantation du Sfam au MDC

- 1 Depuis quand avez-vous accès au système d'audio-messagerie?
-

- 2 Votre téléphone et/ou votre système d'audio-messagerie ont-ils les caractéristiques suivantes?

-----une lumière clignotante ou un indicatif lumineux sur votre téléphone qui indique des nouveaux messages dans la boîte vocale

-----renvoi au poste de réserve - l'appui du 0 pendant le message d'accueil renvoie la personne qui appelle à la secrétaire ou à la réceptionniste

-----les appels sont acheminés automatiquement à la boîte vocale lorsque la ligne est occupée ou qu'elle n'est pas répondue

NON À UN DE CES ITEMS, ALLER À LA QUESTION 3.

- 3 Veuillez m'indiquer si vous pensez avoir besoin de ces caractéristiques auxquelles vous n'avez pas accès présentement:

-----une lumière clignotante ou un indicatif lumineux sur votre téléphone qui indique des nouveaux messages dans la boîte vocale

-----renvoi au poste de réserve - l'appui du 0 pendant le message d'accueil renvoie la personne qui appelle à la secrétaire ou à la réceptionniste

-----les appels sont acheminés automatiquement à la boîte vocale lorsque la ligne est occupée ou qu'elle n'est pas répondue

- 4 Vous a-t-on déjà offert l'option d'avoir ces caractéristiques?

-----oui

-----non

- 5 Lorsque vous vous absentez de votre poste de travail, faites-vous:

-----Un renvoi automatique de votre téléphone à la boîte vocale

-----chaque fois que vous vous absentez

-----seulement lorsque vous vous absentez pour plus de _____ heures ou _____ jours

-----Un renvoi automatique de votre téléphone à la secrétaire ou la réceptionniste

-----chaque fois que vous vous absentez

-----seulement lorsque vous vous absentez pour plus de _____ heures ou _____ jours

-----Aucun renvoi d'appels; le téléphone sonne 3 coups et l'appel est acheminé à la boîte vocale

- 6 Utilisez-vous le système d'audio-messagerie pour

-----répondre le téléphone lorsqu'occupé ou non répondu

-----composer et envoyer des messages aux autres usagers

-----recevoir des messages de ceux qui ont accès à l'audio-messagerie

-----répondre à des messages

-----réacheminer un messages à un collègue

-----envoyer un message de groupe

-----comme bloc-notes : lorsqu'absent du bureau, appeler l'audio-messagerie pour vous laisser des notes de rappel

-----enregistrer les appels importants par l'intermédiaire de Conférence 3 sur le téléphone

-----assigner une boîte vocale à un contact tel un contracteur qui est à l'extérieur du Gouvernement

-----autre. Expliquez.

- 7 Si vous placez un appel qui n'est pas urgent et accédez la boîte vocale de quelqu'un au Ministère, est-ce que vous:
- laissez un message
 - accrochez et essayez de nouveau
 - appuyez sur le 0 pendant le message d'accueil
 - appuyez sur le 0 seulement s'il est indiqué dans le message d'accueil
- 8 Si vous placez un appel qui est urgent et accédez la boîte vocale de quelqu'un au Ministère, est-ce que vous:
- laissez un message
 - accrochez et essayez de nouveau
 - appuyez sur le 0 pendant le message d'accueil
 - appuyez sur le 0 seulement s'il est indiqué dans le message d'accueil
- 9 Lorsque vous laissez un message à quelqu'un, quelle information contient-il, en général?
- nom, numéro de téléphone et un message avec contenu
 - nom, numéro de téléphone et prière de rappeler
- 10 Lorsqu'on vous laisse un message, en général, quelle information contient-il?
- nom, numéro de téléphone et un message avec contenu
 - nom, numéro de téléphone et prière de rappeler
- 11 Quelle information y a-t-il dans votre message d'accueil?
- votre nom
 - comment rejoindre la secrétaire
 - message dans les deux langues officielles

12 Est-ce que le renvoi d'appel ou le numéro de téléphone que vous donnez dans votre message d'accueil correspond à un téléphone qui a un renvoi d'appel automatique au système d'audio-messagerie lorsque la ligne est occupée ou l'appel est non répondu?

-----oui

-----non

-----ne sais pas

-----ne s'applique pas

13 Vous arrive-t-il de changer votre message d'accueil?

-----oui. Si oui, quand _____

-----non

14 Est-ce que vous écoutez vos messages vocaux

-----lorsque la lumière clignote

-----à temps fixe pendant la journée

15 D'après vous, quels sont les plus grands avantages ou aspects positifs de l'audio-messagerie au Ministère des Communications?

16 D'après vous, quels sont les plus grands désavantages de l'utilisation de l'audio-messagerie au Ministère?

- 17 Quelle cote donneriez-vous à l'engagement qu'ont les employés du Ministère à retourner leurs appels?

1	7
-----	-----
pauvre	excellente

- 18 Pensez-vous que la dimension humaine est disparue ou est moins présente depuis que l'audio-messagerie a été introduit au Ministère? Si oui, expliquez.

- 19 Diriez-vous que les transactions peuvent se conclure plus rapidement avec l'utilisation de l'audio-messagerie? Expliquez.

- 20 Avez-vous reçu de la formation sur l'audio-messagerie?

-----oui (ALLER À LA QUESTION 22)

-----non (ALLER À LA QUESTION 21)

- 21 Aimeriez-vous assister à un cours très bref de formation?

-----oui

-----non

(ALLER À LA QUESTION 26)

22 Qui vous a donné la formation sur l'audio-messagerie?

---TIME COMMUNICATIONS

Nom de l'enseignant(e)-----

---un/une collègue

---autre. Précisez.

23 Après la session de formation, pouviez-vous utiliser l'audio-messagerie seul sans l'aide de vos collègues ou de l'enseignant(e)?

-----oui

-----non

24 Sinon, pourquoi pas et qui vous a aidé à utiliser le système?

25 Diriez-vous que vous ne pouviez pas utiliser le système seul parce que:

-----les explications pendant la session de formation n'étaient pas claires ou elles étaient insuffisantes;

-----manque de pratique pendant la session de formation;

-----aucune information sur le système ne fut distribuée avant la session de formation;

-----une autre raison. Précisez-----

- 26 Utilisez-vous le Guide de l'utilisateur?
- l'utilise encore régulièrement
 - l'utilise encore de temps en temps
 - ne l'utilise plus
 - ne l'a jamais utilisé
- 27 Aimeriez-vous voir des modifications apportés au Guide de l'utilisateur?
- oui. Précisez.
 - non
- 28 Savez-vous comment faire ce qui suit avec votre système d'audio-messagerie:
- appeler votre boîte vocale du téléphone d'un autre usager
 - appeler votre boîte vocale de l'extérieur (par exemple, de chez-vous)
 - appeler une autre boîte vocale en passant par le numéro central du système d'audio-messagerie
 - transférer un appel de l'extérieur à la boîte vocale d'un collègue
 - passer par-dessus le message d'accueil d'un autre usager
 - à qui rapporter les problèmes
 - qui appeler quand vous voulez de l'information concernant l'utilisation de la boîte vocale

29 Aimeriez-vous avoir une session de breffage sur l'utilisation efficace de l'audio-messagerie?

-----oui

-----non

30 Désirez-vous conserver votre boîte vocale?

-----oui

-----non

31 Avez-vous d'autres commentaires concernant l'audio-messagerie ou le Service fédéral d'audio-messagerie auquel vous avez accès?

MERCI DE VOTRE COOPÉRATION!!

CACC / CCAC



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--Report on the utilization of the government voice messaging service (GVMS) in the Department of ...

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